

HOUSE No. 3640

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Kevin G. Honan

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act permitting the use of traffic control signal violation monitoring system devices as a means of promoting traffic safety in the cities of the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Kevin G. Honan	17th Suffolk
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	26th Middlesex

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT PERMITTING THE USE OF TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL VIOLATION MONITORING SYSTEM DEVICES AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING TRAFFIC SAFETY IN THE CITIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the
2 contrary, any city town or political subdivision may, upon the acceptance of this act, employ a
3 traffic control signal violation monitoring system and electronic speed monitoring system may be
4 both mobile and fixed along any portion of any ways within its control and may promulgate local
5 measures imposing a penalty on the owner of a motor vehicle for failure by the operator thereof
6 to comply with the laws, codes, regulations, ordinances, rules and/or other forms of legislation
7 governing the traffic control signals in said cities at which a traffic control signal violation
8 monitoring system is located.

9 (a) As used in this act, the following words shall, unless the content clearly indicates
10 otherwise, have the following meanings: "Local measure", shall mean the ordinances, rules and
11 regulations adopted by any city town or political subdivision, whichever is applicable,
12 establishing a schedule of fines imposed on the owner of a motor vehicle for failure by the
13 operator thereof to comply with the laws, codes, regulations, ordinances, rules and/or other forms
14 of legislation governing the traffic control signals in said cities at which a traffic control signal
15 violation monitoring system is located; "Motor vehicle", shall have the meaning provided in
16 section 1 of chapter 90 of the General Laws; "Operator", shall have the meaning provided in
17 section 1 of chapter 90 of the General Laws; "Owner", shall have the meaning provided in
18 section 1 of chapter 90 of the General Laws; "Traffic control signal violation monitoring
19 system", shall mean an automated motor vehicle sensor device installed to work in conjunction
20 with a traffic control signal which produces two or more digital photographs of each motor
21 vehicle at the time it is used or operated in a manner that is in violation of the traffic control
22 signal at which the automated monitoring system is located. The photographs, must, at a

minimum, record the rear of the motor vehicle, with at least one of the images clearly recording the motor vehicle behind the stop bar immediately prior to the violation of the traffic control signal, and at least one image recording the motor vehicle passing through the intersection in violation of the traffic control signal. Additionally, at least one of the images must clearly identify the registration plate of the motor vehicle; "Violation", shall mean the failure of an operator of a motor vehicle to comply with the laws, codes, regulations, ordinances, rules and/or other forms of legislation governing the traffic control signals or the rate of speed at which vehicle enters the intersection at which a traffic control signal violation monitoring system is located.

(b) No traffic control signal violation monitoring system shall be utilized in such a manner as to take a frontal view photograph of the motor vehicle that is in violation of the traffic control signal.

(c) A certificate, or a facsimile thereof, based upon inspection of photographs produced by a traffic control signal violation monitoring system, and sworn to or affirmed by a police officer authorized to issue citations for violations of traffic signals at the subject intersection, shall be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein. No photographs taken in conformance with this act shall be discoverable in any judicial or administrative proceeding other than a proceeding held pursuant to this act; and no photograph taken in conformance with this act shall be admissible in any judicial or administrative proceeding other than in a proceeding to adjudicate liability for such violation of this act.

(d) For each violation pursuant to this act, the owner or owners of a vehicle shall be liable for the penalty imposed by a local measure; provided, however, that no owner of a vehicle shall be liable for a penalty imposed pursuant to this act where the operator of such vehicle has been convicted of the underlying violation pursuant to a citation issued in accordance with section 2 of chapter 90C of the General Laws, and provided, further, that the maximum penalty that may be imposed pursuant this act shall be One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) for each violation.

(e) A penalty imposed by a local measure may, if so provided in the local measure, be increased by up to 33 1/3% if said fine remains unpaid in excess of 30 days after a notice of violation has been issued consistent with the procedures established in section 20A 1/2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws.

(f) A penalty imposed by a local measure for a violation pursuant to this act shall not be deemed a criminal conviction and shall not be made part of the operating record of the person upon whom such liability is imposed, nor shall such imposition of a penalty be subject to merit rating for insurance purposes and no surcharge points shall be imposed in the provision of motor vehicle insurance coverage.

SECTION 2. (a) The compensation paid to the manufacturer or vendor of the traffic control signal monitoring system deployed as a means of promoting traffic safety as authorized herein

shall not be based upon the number of traffic citations issued or any portion or percentage of the fine generated by such citations. The compensation paid to such manufacturer or vendor of the equipment shall be based upon the value of such equipment and the services provided or rendered in support of the traffic control signal monitoring system.

(b) Other than for purposes of enforcement of a violation of this act or for purposes of an owner defending a violation of this act, no private entity or individual may obtain photographs or records taken pursuant to this act.

SECTION 3. (a) The parking clerk designated or appointed by the city shall supervise and coordinate the administration of violations issued pursuant to Section 1. The parking clerk shall have the authority to hire and designate such personnel as may be necessary or contract for such services to implement the provisions of this section.

(b) It shall be the duty of the parking clerk of the city employing its traffic control signal violation monitoring system to cause the notice of violation to the registered owner or owners of any motor vehicle identified in any photographs produced by such device as evidence of a violation pursuant to this act. Such notice shall contain but not be limited to the following information: a copy of the aforementioned recorded images showing the vehicle in violation of the traffic signal, the registration number and state of issuance of said registration number of the vehicle; the date, time and intersection location of the violation; the specific violation charged; a schedule of fines for such violation as established by the city or town; instructions for the return of the notice; and text as follows: "This notice may be returned personally, by mail, or by an agent authorized in writing. A hearing may be obtained upon the written request of the registered owner in writing. Failure to obey this notice within 30 days of issuance of this notice will result in the non-renewal or suspension of the license to drive and the certificate of registration of the registered owner."

(c) In the case of a violation involving a motor vehicle registered under the laws of the Commonwealth, such notice of violation shall be mailed within 14 days of the violation, exclusive of Sundays and holidays, to the address of the registered owner or owners as listed in the records of the registrar of motor vehicles. In the case of any motor vehicle registered under the laws of another state or country, such notice of violation shall be mailed within 21 days of the violation, exclusive of Sundays and holidays, to the address of the registered owner or owners as listed in the records of the official in such state or country having charge of the registration of such motor vehicle. If said address is unavailable, it shall be sufficient for the parking clerk to mail notice of violation to the official in such state or country having charge of the registration of such motor vehicle.

(d) Notice of violation shall be sent by first class mail in accordance with subsection (c) and shall include an affidavit form approved by the parking clerk for the purpose of complying with subsection (g). A manual or automatic record of mailing processed by or on behalf of the parking

clerk in the ordinary course of business shall be prima facie evidence thereof, and shall be admitted as evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding, as to the facts contained therein.

(e) Any motor vehicle owner to whom notice of violation has been issued pursuant to this act may admit responsibility for such violation and pay the fine provided therein. Payment shall be made either personally or through a duly authorized agent, or by appearing before the parking clerk during normal office hours, or by mailing both payment and notice of the violation to the parking clerk. Payment by mail shall be made only by money order, credit card or check made out to the parking clerk. Payment of the established fine and any applicable penalties shall operate as a final disposition of the case. Payment of the fine by one motor vehicle owner shall be satisfaction of the fine as to all other motor vehicle owners of the same motor vehicle for the same violation.

(f) Any owner to whom a notice of violation has been issued may, within 30 days of the mailing of said notice by the parking clerk, request a hearing to contest the liability alleged in said notice. A hearing request shall be made either personally, via the internet or through a duly authorized agent by appearing before the parking clerk during regular business hours or by mailing a request in writing to the parking clerk. Upon receipt of a hearing request, the parking clerk shall forthwith schedule the matter before a person hereafter referred to as a hearing officer, said hearing officer to be the parking clerk of the city wherein the violation occurred or such other person or persons as the parking clerk may designate. Written notice of the date, time and place of said hearing shall be sent by first class mail to each registered owner. Said hearing shall be informal, the rules of evidence shall not apply, and the decision of the hearing officer shall be final subject to judicial review as outlined by section 14 of Chapter 30A of the General Laws. Within twenty-one days of the hearing, the parking clerk or the hearing officer should send by first class mail to the registered owner or owners the decision of the hearing officer, including the reasons for the outcome.

(g) Any owner to whom a notice of violation has been issued shall not be liable for a violation under the provisions of this act (1) if the violation was necessary to allow the passage of an emergency vehicle; (2) if the violation was necessary in order to protect the property or person of another; (3) if the violation was incurred while participating in a funeral procession; (4) if the violation was incurred during a period of time in which the motor vehicle was reported to the police department of any state, city or town as having been stolen and had not been recovered prior to the time the violation occurred; (5) if the operator of the motor vehicle was operating the motor vehicle under a rental or lease agreement and the owner of the motor vehicle is a rental or leasing company and has complied with the provisions of section 20E of chapter 90 of the General Laws; (6) if the operator of the motor vehicle was convicted of the underlying violation pursuant to a citation issued in accordance with section 2 of chapter 90C of the General Laws; or (7) if the violation was necessary to comply with any other law or regulation governing the operation of a motor vehicle at the intersection. An owner disputing a violation under this

section shall, within 30 days, provide the parking clerk with a signed affidavit in a form approved by the parking clerk, as provided for in subsection (d), stating (1) the reason for disputing the violation; (2) the full legal name and address of the owner of the motor vehicle; (3) the full legal name and address of the operator of the motor vehicle at the time the violation occurred; (4) the names and addresses of all witnesses supporting the owner's defense and the specifics of their knowledge; and where applicable (5) the signed statements from witnesses.

(h) If an owner to whom notice of violation has been issued either fails to pay the fine provided for in said notice in accordance with subsection (e), or fails to receive a favorable adjudication of said notice from a hearing officer in accordance with subsection (f), the parking clerk shall notify the registrar of motor vehicles who shall place the matter on record. Upon notification to the registrar of two or more notices under this act and/or sections 20A and 20A 1/2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws from the parking clerk of either city or state authorities or agencies, the registrar shall not issue or renew or may suspend such owner's license to operate a motor vehicle or motor vehicle registration until after notification from the parking clerk of each city, agency or authority, from whom the registrar received notification, that all fines, taxes and penalties owed by such owner pursuant to either this section, or arising out of the parking or usage of such owner's motor vehicles, have been disposed of in accordance with law. Upon such notification to the registrar, an additional charge of \$20 payable to the registrar but collected by the city, and an additional charge of \$20 payable to and collected by the city, shall be assessed against the registered owner of said motor vehicle. It shall be the duty of the parking clerk to notify the registrar forthwith that such case has been so disposed; provided, however, that certified receipt of full and final payment from the parking clerk of the city or state agency or authority issuing such violation shall also serve as legal notice to the registrar that said violation has been disposed of in accordance with law. The certified receipt shall be printed in such form as the registrar of motor vehicles may approve.

(i) Upon the accumulation by an owner of two or more outstanding notices under this act and/or sections 20A and 20A 1/2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws on account of violations of any statute, ordinance, order, rule or regulation relating to the operation, control or parking of motor vehicles in a particular city, notwithstanding any notification to the registrar, the parking clerk of such city may notify the chief of police or director of traffic and parking of such city that the vehicle bearing the registration to which said notices have been issued shall be removed and stored or otherwise immobilized by a mechanical device at the expense of the registered owner of such vehicle until such time as all fines, taxes and penalties owed by such owner pursuant to either this section, or arising out of the parking or usage of such owner's motor vehicle have been disposed of in accordance with law. No vehicle shall be removed, stored, or otherwise immobilized until and unless the owner of such motor vehicle shall have received 10 days notification by mail that such motor vehicle may be removed, stored, or immobilized without further notification. It shall be sufficient for the parking clerk to mail, postage prepaid, said notification to the last known address of the registered owner. It shall be sufficient for the

175 parking clerk, in the case of a motor vehicle registered in another state or country, to mail
176 notification to the official in such state or country having charge of the registration of such motor
177 vehicle.

178 (j) Photographic and other recorded evidence obtained through the use of automated
179 enforcement devices deployed as a means of promoting traffic safety authorized herein shall be
180 destroyed within 1 year of final disposition of any recorded event. Said cities shall file notice
181 annually with the Secretary of State that said records have been destroyed in accordance with
182 this section.

183 (k) The administrator of the traffic control signal monitoring system within any city town or
184 political subdivision accepting this act shall submit a report regarding the use and operation of
185 the traffic control signal monitoring system. The Massachusetts state Department of
186 Transportation will, within 90 days of passage of this act, promulgate rules and regulations for
187 the orderly operation and standardization of this act. Rules and regulations not promulgated
188 within 90 days will then require any city town or political subdivision accepting this act to
189 promulgate rules and regulations within its jurisdiction.